

WHAT WE CLAIM IS

1. A process for preparing a yoghurt comprising the following steps:
 - a) adding a measured amount of whey protein to a milk and calculating the casein: whey protein weight ratio in the resulting mixture,
 - b) determining the optimum pH of the milk at the casein: whey protein ratio calculated in step a) for preparing a yoghurt having a desired gel strength,
 - c) adjusting the pH of the milk from step a) to the optimum pH, determined in step b),
 - d) heating the milk from step c) to a temperature of from 70°C to its boiling point for a time of 0.1 seconds to 60 minutes, and
 - e) acidifying the milk stream from step d) using a microorganism treatment or chemical acidification to prepare a yoghurt.
2. The process of claim 1, wherein the casein: whey protein weight ratio calculated in step a) is from 3.2:1 to 1.6:1 and the optimum pH determined in step b) is from 7.1 to 6.5.
3. The process of claim 1, wherein the casein: whey protein weight ratio calculated in step a) is from 2.9:1 to 1.6:1 and the optimum pH determined in step b) is from 6.5 to 6.4.
4. The process of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the temperature in step d) is maintained for from 10 seconds to 30 minutes.
5. The process of any one of the preceding claims, wherein in step c) the pH is adjusted by the addition of either a food grade acid or base.
6. The process of any one of the preceding claims wherein, prior to step e) the pH of the milk is adjusted to pH 6.7, when required.
7. The process of any one of the preceding claims wherein step e) is conducted at a temperature at or below about 30°C.

8. The process of any one of the preceding claims, wherein in step d) glucono-delta-lactone is hydrolysed to acidify the milk.

9. A yoghurt prepared by a process as claimed in any one of the preceding claims.